**Policy on school bags**

†4007. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the public schools all over the country are forcing small children to carry heavy school bags;

(b) if so, what steps Government is taking to check the said atrocity being meted out to children;

(c) whether Government is contemplating on making a uniform policy in this regard; and

(d) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has already given following guidelines to schools affiliated to it with regard to reduction of school bag loads:

(i) Not to over prescribe textbooks for primary classes and to keep the number of textbooks limited so as not to exceed the number prescribed by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

(ii) No school bag for children of Classes I & II and to allow students to leave their school bags in school itself.

(iii) No homework to the children of Classes I & II and to evolve a concept of alternative to homework for the students of Classes III to V.

(iv) To plan a judicious time table to avoid unnecessary loading of school bags.

(c) and (d) The problem of heavy school bag was brought out in the report 'Learning without Burden' in 1993. National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005 has several recommendations on reduction of physical, psychological and transactional load on school children. Based on NCF, 2005, new syllabi and textbooks have been prepared by NCERT and have been adopted in schools affiliated to CBSE. Several States have also revised their syllabi and textbooks based on NCF, 2005.

**Districts without Government Degree Colleges**

†4008. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of districts in the country where Government Degree Colleges do not exist;

(b) whether there is any scheme of Government to open Government Degree Colleges in all the districts of the country;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, by when the said scheme is likely to be implemented; and

(d) by when the said scheme is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) There are 593 districts in the country of which, according to the University Grants Commission (UGC), only 486 districts have Government Degree Colleges.

(b) to (d) Colleges are established by the State Government, Trust, Registered Societies or Private Management; and not by the Central Government. However, during the XI Plan, the Central Government would help States set up colleges in 370 identified districts having Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) lower than the national average and number of colleges of general education per 1,00,000 population in 18—23 age-group.

**Criticism of Mosques and Kashmir Policy**

†4009. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are such research scholars in the School for International Studies of the Jawahar Lal Nehru University, who describe India as anti-mosque and indulge in criticising its policy on Kashmir through e-mails;

(b) whether these scholars declare themselves to be a freelance columnists;

(c) if so, whether any investigation has been made in regard to their activities; and

(d) what action would be taken, in case the findings establish such activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (d) According to the information furnished by Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), the Schools syllabus and teaching does not, in any way, make any derogatory comments either on mosques or India's Kashmir Policy and no existing scholar of the University has made any such observations.

**Stoppage of educational programmes by NGOs**

4010. SHRI DARA SINGH:
SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any complaint that some Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) either stop or cut short their educational programmes, after receiving the grants/aid from Government;

(b) if so, the details of those NGOs during each of the last three years, State-wise and UT-wise, till date;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.